

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 496
By Kisber

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Coach Sandy Fitzgerald and the 1995-1996 Jackson Central-Merry girls' basketball team on being crowned Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association Class AAA State Tournament champions.

WHEREAS, the Tennessee General Assembly is pleased to recognize the accomplishments of our truly exceptional sports teams who persevere through a tough regular season and tournament schedule to win a state championship; and

WHEREAS, despite having a great record, the 1995-1996 Jackson Central-Merry girls' basketball team was overlooked and underrated; and

WHEREAS, Jackson Central-Merry overcame a tremendous challenge from a team who was nationally ranked at the time and featured the Class AAA Miss Basketball to win the coveted Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association Class AAA State Tournament; and

WHEREAS, Jackson Central-Merry compiled a rare 23-1 regular season record; and

WHEREAS, this very talented team won the District 13-AAA Tournament, beating Lexington High School in an exciting 61-59 game; and

WHEREAS, Jackson Central-Merry finished runner-up at the Region 7-AAA Tournament; and

WHEREAS, in the crucial substate game, the Lady Cougars defeated Hamilton High School 66-53; and

WHEREAS, in the state tournament, with the thunderous applause of their many fans and other basketball aficionados ringing triumphantly in their ears, Jackson Central-Merry bested Sullivan East High School 70-52, Columbia High School 41-39 and powerful Oak Ridge High School 70-61, to win the state title; and

WHEREAS, this title represents the first state championship in any sport by a Madison County squad; and

WHEREAS, the Lady Cougars finished this very memorable season with a excellent record of 31-2, an enviable winning percentage of .940; and

WHEREAS, Jackson Central-Merry was ranked as the twentieth best team in the nation by the authoritative *USA Today* Super 25 High School Girls poll, the first time that a JCM basketball squad has been nationally ranked; and

WHEREAS, the expert and highly regarded **Coach** of the team was **Sandy Fitzgerald**, who has been aided by **Assistant Coach Bobby Jelks**; and

WHEREAS, the team leaders were sharp-shooting senior forward sensation **Ginger Bryant**, who set a school record for most points scored in a career, with more than 1,500 points and was chosen First Team All-State, State-Tournament Most Valuable Player, All-Region 7-AAA Tournament, All-District 13-AAA Tournament and regular season All-District 13-AAA choice; senior center **Collin Carmichael**, who was recognized as Second Team All-State, a member of the All-State Tournament, All-Region 7-AAA Tournament, All-District 13-AAA Tournament and regular season All-District 13-AAA squads; senior guard **Meg Griffin**, an Honorable Mention All-State, All-State Tournament, All-Region 7-AAA Tournament, All-District 13-AAA Tournament and regular season All-District 13-AAA choice; and junior guard **Leigh Ann Holloway**, a regular season All-District 13-AAA honoree; and

WHEREAS, the other members of this excellent team were juniors **Heather Bell**, **Leah Holcomb**, **LaDawna Sowell**, **Hannah Marcom**, **Ashley Pope** and **Blair Vollmer**, sophomores

Julia Baker and **Ellen Singleton** and freshmen **Nia Hill** and **Christal Taylor**, each of whom made a significant contribution to the success of the team; and

WHEREAS, the hard-working managers were **Emily Hopper**, **Danielle Hoffman**, **Libby Hassell** and **Judie Bulter**; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we pause in our deliberations to specially honor and commend this great team; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we honor and congratulate Coach Sandy Fitzgerald and the 1995-1996 Jackson Central-Merry girls' basketball team on winning the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association Class AAA State Tournament and wish them much continued success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That appropriate copies of this resolution be prepared for presentation to the school and each person named above, with this final clause omitted from such copy.